

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2026**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES—
FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS**

Message Three

Faith, Love, and Hope—the Structure of a Holy Life for the Church Life

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 1:2-3

- I. Faith, love, and hope are the structure of a holy life for the church life, which is the genuine Christian life and the content of Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonians—1:2-3; 1 Cor. 13:13:**
- A. Faith is the nature and strength of the work; love, the motivation for and characteristic of labor; and hope, the source of endurance—1 Thes. 1:3; 5:8.
 - B. Faith is toward God (1:8), love is toward the saints (3:12; 4:9-10), and hope is in the Lord's coming (2:19).
 - C. To turn to God from the idols is accomplished by faith infused into the new converts through their hearing of the word of the gospel; to serve a living and true God is by love produced within the believers by the Triune God as the all-inclusive Supplier who lives in them; to await the Son of God from the heavens is the hope that strengthens the believers to stand steadfastly in their faith—1:3, 9-10; cf. Ezek. 14:3; 1 John 5:21:
 - 1. God must be living to us and in us in every aspect of our daily life; the fact that God controls, directs, corrects, and adjusts us, even in such small things as our thoughts and motives, is a proof that He is living—Phil. 1:8; 2:5, 13; 1:20; 1 Tim. 3:15.
 - 2. We live under the control, direction, and correction of a living God to be a pattern of the glad tidings that we spread—1 Thes. 1:5-8; 2:10; 2 Thes. 3:5.
 - 3. As believers in Christ, we must live a life in our spirit which bears the testimony that the God whom we worship and serve is living in the details of our life; the reason we do not do or say certain things should be that God is living in us—Rom. 8:6, 16.
- II. The work of faith is the foundation of our Christian life and service—1 Thes. 1:3:**
- A. The word *faith* refers both to the things the believers believe in (the objective faith—Eph. 4:13; 1 Tim. 1:19b; 2 Tim. 4:7) and to the believing action of the believers (the subjective faith—Gal. 2:20).
 - B. The faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith—Rom. 3:22 and footnote 1; Gal. 2:16 and footnote 1.
 - C. Faith comes out of hearing, hearing is through the word of Christ, hearing equals seeing, and seeing equals knowing Christ—Rom. 10:17:
 - 1. When the word of the Bible is spoken to us and heard by us, we contact Christ as the living word in the written word, and He becomes the applied word as the life-giving Spirit in us—John 1:1; 5:39-40; 6:63.
 - 2. When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit imparts Himself as the believing element into us that He may believe for us; hence, He Himself is our faith—Heb. 12:2a.
 - D. Faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen; nothing is impossible to faith—11:1; 2 Cor. 4:18; Matt. 17:20b; *Hymns*, #535:

1. To substantiate is to give substance to the reality of the substance not seen; this is the action of faith; “the people who know their God will show strength and take action”—Dan. 11:32b.
 2. The book of Acts is a record of people who take action as the acting God with the “work of faith,” which is to be those who are “working the work of the Lord”—1 Thes. 1:3; 1 Cor. 16:10; 15:58; Acts 1:8; cf. 16:22; Heb. 13:6.
 3. The Lord’s recovery is a recovery from things seen to things unseen (2 Cor. 4:18); both the eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15) and the great reward (10:35) promised by God are things hoped for and things not seen.
- E. Faith is the indicator of the believers’ life in the enjoyment of the Divine Trinity—1 Thes. 1:3, 5, 7-8; Rom. 1:8:
1. Faith is God’s word accepted by us; because this faith is living and active, it results in the work of faith, which includes all the proper actions that issue out of our living faith—1 Thes. 1:7-10.
 2. Faith is to believe that God is; to believe that God is implies that we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Heb. 11:6; Gen. 5:24; John 8:58; 2 Cor. 5:7.
- F. The way to receive such a faith is to contact the source, the Lord, the processed and consummated God, by calling on Him, praying to Him, and pray-reading His Word—Heb. 4:16; 12:1-2; Rom. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Eph. 6:17-18.
- G. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe in and to speak forth the Lord; faith is in our spirit, which is mingled with the Holy Spirit—2 Cor. 4:13.

III. The labor of love is the key of the fruitfulness of our work of faith—1 Thes. 1:3:

- A. Love is the intrinsic motivation, the inner life, and the real strength of our work of faith, which is to have the Lord as our “first love” in order to do “the first works”—Rev. 2:4-5; Gal. 5:6; cf. Col. 1:28—2:1; 1 Cor. 15:58; Acts 20:20, 31.
- B. God is love; we love because He first loved us—1 John 4:8, 19:
1. God’s love motivates us, His children, to love people without any discrimination—Matt. 5:43-48; cf. 9:12-13; 27:38; Luke 23:42-43.
 2. Love motivates us to shepherd people with the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God and the shepherding and seeking spirit of our Savior Christ; this is the labor of love—15:3-10, 17-18; John 10:11, 16; 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4.
 3. Love is not jealous, is not provoked, does not take account of evil, covers all things, endures all things, never falls away, and is the greatest—1 Cor. 13:4-8, 13.
 4. The Body of Christ builds itself up in love—Eph. 4:16; 1 Cor. 8:1.
 5. We need a burning spirit of love to overcome the degradation of today’s church—2 Tim. 1:6-7; 2 Cor. 5:14; 12:15.
 6. To overcome the degradation of the church, we need to pursue love with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Cor. 13:1.
 7. Love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ—12:31b—13:1.

IV. The endurance of hope is the long life of our work of faith—1 Thes. 1:3:

- A. The life that we have received through regeneration enables us to have a hope, with numerous aspects, for this age, for the coming age, and for eternity—1 Pet. 1:3; Titus 1:2:
1. In this age we have the hope of growing in life, of maturing, of manifesting our gifts, of exercising our functions, of being transformed, of overcoming, of being redeemed in our body, and of entering into glory—Col. 1:27; 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 9; Rom. 8:23-25, 30; Phil. 3:21; 2 Tim. 4:7-8.

2. In the coming age we have the hope of entering into the kingdom, of reigning with the Lord, and of enjoying the blessings of eternal life in the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens—Rev. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:18.
3. In eternity we have the hope of being the New Jerusalem, where we will participate fully in the consummated blessings of the eternal life in its ultimate manifestation in eternity—Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5.

- B. The endurance of hope is the “endurance of Christ” (2 Thes. 3:5) and the “endurance in Jesus” (Rev. 1:9), and we “run with endurance the race which is set before us, looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-2).
- C. The endurance of hope subdues all kinds of disappointments, discouragements, and impossibilities; it overcomes all kinds of oppositions, obstacles, and frustrations—4:16; Phil. 2:13; 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Thes. 3:5.
- D. Such endurance consummates in gaining sinners, feeding the believers, perfecting the saints, and building up the church, the Body of Christ, for the kingdom of God and of Christ—2 Cor. 6:4; 1 Cor. 15:58.

V. Our work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope are “according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us”—2 Cor. 10:13:

- A. In spiritual work, the most important thing is to know “the pattern...in the mountain” (Heb. 8:5); if there is no comprehension of God’s plan, there is no possibility for God’s work (Acts 26:19).
- B. Every worker has a specific work which God measures to him and a pathway upon which God wants him to walk; if you are standing in your rightful position, working in your rightful service, and walking on your rightful pathway, that is the highest glory—13:25a, 36a; 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:7.

VI. Paul said, “That I may finish my course”—Acts 20:24:

- A. Jessie Penn-Lewis spoke the following—“There is a ‘course’ prepared for every believer at the time of his regeneration for the purpose of bringing the new life he has just received to its full maturity, and for the purpose of making his life useful to God to the uttermost. The responsibility of every believer is to seek out this ‘course’ and walk therein. Others cannot determine and say what this course is. Only God knows and only God can make man know; only He can lead the believers into this course. Today [the situation] is the same as in the past when he led Jeremiah and the other prophets, and Paul, Philip, and other apostles.”
- B. The most glorious thing in a man’s life is that he would do the things that God wants him to do on the very ground that God has set for him; for every believer, there is a pathway predetermined by God for him to walk on.
- C. The Lord said to Jeremiah, “Everywhere I send you, you shall go; / And everything I command you, you shall speak”—Jer. 1:7b.
- D. Those who are chosen by God have absolutely no freedom; even if they want to run away, they will not succeed (cf. Jonah 1—2); today many believers zealously work, but there are few who do what God measures to them and take the way that God ordains for them—see *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 9, pp. 301-303.

VII. Our labor for the Lord in His resurrection life with His resurrection power is never in vain; such labor will be rewarded by the returning Lord with the authority to rule and with the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming kingdom—1 Cor. 15:58; 3:12; Matt. 24:45-47; 25:21, 23.